

QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENT QA 46 – STUDY CENTRE (VIA SUPPORT SERVICE PROVIDER): APPROVAL, MONITORING AND REVIEW PROCEDURE

Introduction and Definitions

The purpose of this document is to outline the approval, monitoring and review of UK and overseas Study Centres where Arden University contracts premises and support facilities for their campus-based provision through a *Support Service Provider*. These procedures are aligned to the University's Regulatory Framework and the QAA UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance; Partnerships, and ensures responsibilities are clearly documented and standards are maintained and enhanced.

Support Service Provider

This is a partner institution which acts as a support provider in terms of premises, learning resources, pastoral support or facilities, with full responsibility for academic delivery and assessment of the programme being retained by the University. Partnerships with *Support Service Providers* will also seek to include provision for Arden University staff to teach students on the partner organisation's premises.

Arden University may also operate Study Centres on premises which are directly owned or managed by the University or by its parent company. Such centres do not constitute a partnership and will be approved by Arden University Executive and Academic Board, following a site inspection by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) and Registrar or their nominees.

Approval Process

There are six key stages involved in the approval process for a Study Centre via *Support Service Provider* (please see appendix 1), namely:

1. Study Centre (via *Support Service Provider*) Business Plan
2. Approval to proceed by Arden University Executive
3. Due Diligence and Site Visit by Partnership Committee
4. Approval by Academic Board
5. *Support Service Provider* Agreement
6. Collaborative and Partnership Register

Stage 1. Study Centre (via *Support Service Provider*) Business Plan

The Study Centre (via *Support Service Provider*) Business Plan (please see appendix 2) will outline the case for the Study Centre, including strategic, financial and market analysis. The proposal will be initially

considered by Arden University Executive for an approval to proceed. The Study Centre (via *Support Service Provider*) Business Plan will be developed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for all UK Study Centres or the International Director for all overseas Study Centres. If the Study Centre proposal involves a partnership with a *Support Service Provider*, then details will be clearly highlighted within the Study Centre (via *Support Service Provider*) Business Plan.

Stage 2. Approval to proceed by Arden University Executive

Arden University Executive will be required to assess the rationale for a Study Centre against the University's strategic aims and mission. The appropriateness of the proposal will also need to be verified against associated costs and perceived market opportunities of the Study Centre. On approval to proceed from Arden University Executive, the proposal will transfer to the Partnership Committee for due diligence of the *Support Service Provider*.

Stage 3. Due Diligence and Site Visit by Partnership Committee

The Partnership Committee is responsible for checking the suitability of the *Support Service Provider* to provide the services they will be contracted for and identifying any possible risk prior to an agreement.

In conjunction with the Study Centre Business Plan, the due diligence (please see appendix 3) will aim to demonstrate the following points:

- appropriate professional standing of *the Support Service Provider* and legal capacity to enter into an agreement with the University
- financial stability of the *Support Service Provider* and assurance of registered status, ownership, internal management arrangements. The *Support Service Provider* must be a legal entity operating in accordance with the legal obligations pertaining to the country in which it operates. The organisation must also have permission from any relevant authorities to deliver the services that it contracts to undertake with the University.
- identification of any business and/or ethical links that might pose a reputational risk to the University
- a review of the *Support Service Provider's* current and past partnership arrangements that may conflict with the University
- for international Study Centres, identification of in-country approval that may be required for delivery of University awards at the *Support Service Provider* location

The completion of the Study Centre Due Diligence Form and collation of supporting evidence will be co-ordinated by the Senior Quality Manager.

The Partnership Committee will scrutinise all due diligence documentations, together with the Business Plan and decide whether or not to convene a Site Visit Panel (please see appendix 4).

The Site Visit Panel will comprise of the Registrar or the Director of Student Experience and if required, a Head of School. In addition, the Partnership Committee will consider whether an external subject specialist should be appointed to the Site Visit Panel. An external subject specialist will normally only be required if there are any subject specialist resources or facilities to be considered.

The Site Visit Panel will consider:

- The suitability and capacity of the facilities, resources and premises to be used by Arden University students, including the provision of an appropriate and safe working environment for students;
- The suitability of any student support services which will be utilised by students;
- The partner's arrangements for managing and developing its facilities, resources and relevant support services;
- The adequacy of any subject specialist learning resources, such as laboratories or specialist provision, where appropriate.

Stage 4. Approval by Academic Board

Academic Board will consider the rationale for the Study Centre (via *Support Service Provider*), as well as the written report of the Site Visit Panel and may approve the provision or highlight any further investigation required. Academic Board will verify that arrangements for delivery are appropriate and that students will be provided with learning opportunities of suitable quality and academic standards.

Stage 5. Support Service Provider Agreement

Following approval from Academic Board a formal agreement will be drawn up by the General Legal Counsel with the *Support Service Provider*. Roles and responsibilities will be clearly set out and agreed via a signed agreement before any *Support Service Provider* partnership commences. The agreement will be approved by Arden University Executive and signed by the Vice-Chancellor and the *Support Service Provider*. A copy of the agreement will be maintained by the Senior Quality Manager. The agreement will include:

- financial details
- minimum student numbers
- a schedule of roles and responsibilities of both parties
- quality assurance requirements
- legal aspects
- termination arrangements to protect interest of students should the agreement need to end by either party

Stage 6. Collaborative and Partnership Register

All signed *Support Service Provider* agreements will be added to the University's Collaborative and Partnership Register. The Register will detail the start, end and review date of the *Support Service Provider* agreement.

Monitoring Process

All Study Centres via *Support Service Providers* will be monitored at two distinct levels; programme and partner. The programme level monitoring will be in accordance with the University academic standards and quality management processes, regardless of the provision; Study Centre or on-line distance learning. The partner level review will be additional monitoring to ensure that the conduct of University programmes can continue with a *Support Service Provider*.

Programme Level Monitoring:

The programme monitoring process has been adapted to ensure student performance and feedback can be succinctly captured for all University provision on the following mechanisms:

- Module Evaluation – on completion of each module, all students will be asked to complete a Module Evaluation Survey. This will measure student views on academic material and resources; academic and other support; teaching and learning; assessments and general management of the module.
- Module Leader Report – module leaders will complete an evaluation of their programme, taking into account student data and feedback across all University provision.
- Subject Boards and Awards Boards - consider student progression across all University provision and if needed request further investigation on a particular provision.
- External Examiners – provide a report on modules taking into account all University provision.
- Programme Team Leader Report – programme team leaders will complete an evaluation of their programme across all University provision and reflect on student progression, failure, withdrawal and award statistics.
- Student Feedback – the Staff Student Liaison Committees organised at Study Centres will ensure feedback is captured on all aspects of a programme and forwarded to Programme Team Leaders, as well as presentation at Course Committee.
- Tutor Performance Monitoring – the programme team leader report at Course Committee incorporates tutor performance and development on marking and moderation and lesson observations for all University provision.
- Course Committee – oversight of programme management and enhancement to ensure programmes have been delivered in accordance with student, University and national expectations.

- Annual Monitoring Report – a detailed summary presented to Academic Board of the previous year operations, good practice, opportunities for enhancement and feedback on all University provision.

Partner (Support Service Provider) Level Review

The Partnership Committee will undertake a review of the continuous suitability of *Support Service Providers* to ensure the student experience at Study Centres remains comparable with standards and quality throughout the University.

The purpose of partner review will be to:

- Provide assurance that a *Support Service Providers* continues to be a suitable partnership for Study Centre provision.
- Ensure currency of *Support Service Provider* agreements and address any needs identified via the review process.
- Ensure student handbooks are updated with any changes to premises, learning resources, pastoral support or facilities with the *Support Service Provider* approved by the Partnership Committee.
- Assess strategic, financial and operational management of *Support Service Providers* and manage identified risks or if required, recommend termination of agreements to Arden University Executive.

The partner review will be undertaken on an annual basis and co-ordinated by the Senior Quality Manager.

Termination by University

In the event the University decides to end a partnership with a *Support Service Provider*, then the termination will be carried out in line with terms of the contract. In such cases termination can be actioned due to a variety of reasons (e.g. ongoing poor quality, lack of sufficient recruitment, change in strategic direction). The termination process will be initiated by the Partnership Committee and subject to approval by Arden University Executive and Academic Board.

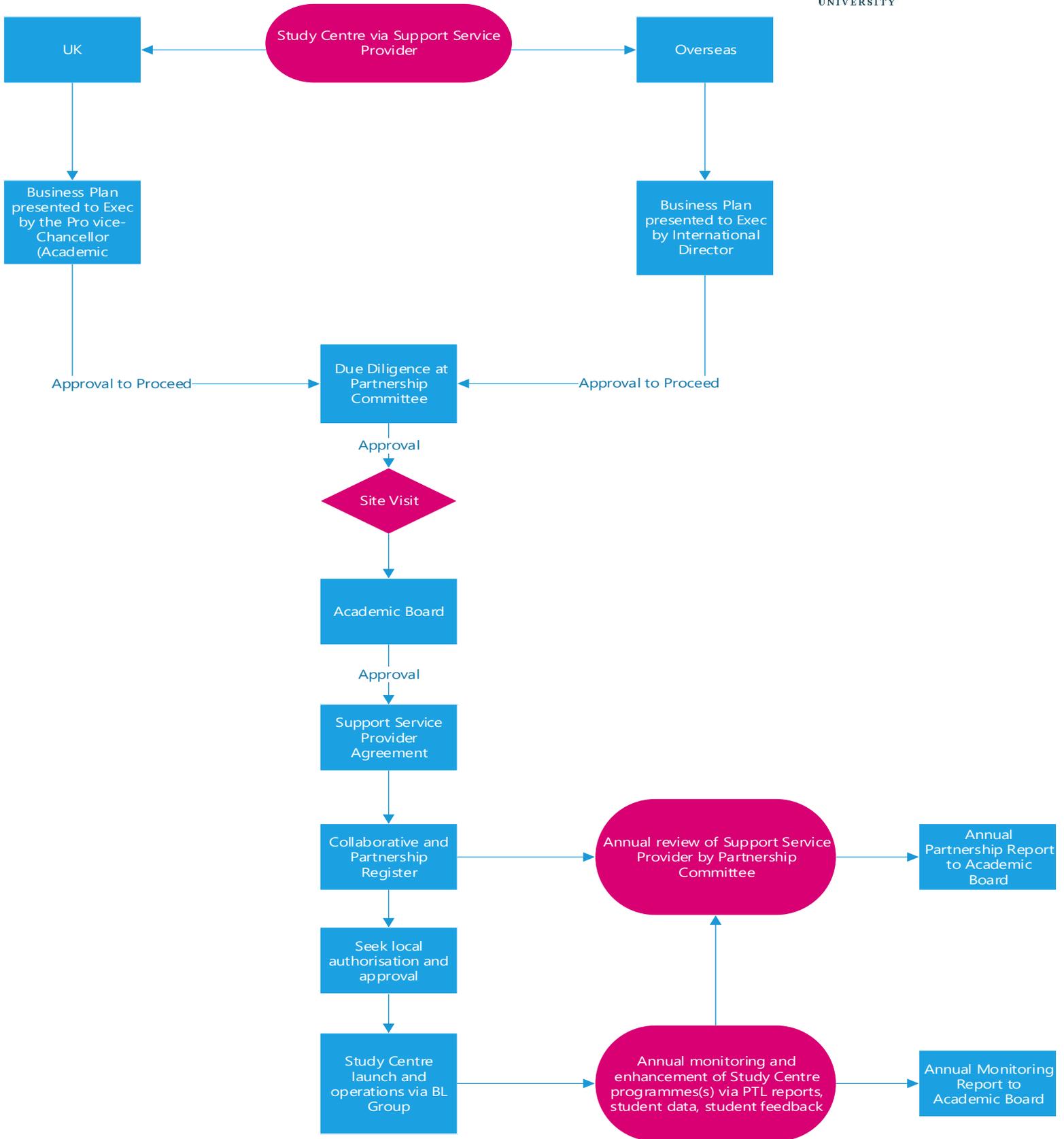
The termination process will ensure that the student experience is maintained and protected throughout the exit period.

On approval of termination from Arden University Executive, a meeting to confirm the termination decision will be held with the *Support Service Provider*. A formal letter will set out details of termination and the *Support Service Provider* will be removed from the Collaborative and Partnership Register.

Termination by *Support Service Provider*

A partnership can be terminated by the *Support Service Provider* but must comply with the terms of the contract and ensure current students are able to complete their studies up to the maximum registration period. The *Support Service Provider* will be advised to send a formal letter of termination with rationale for closure fully communicated. The University will advise the *Support Service Provider* to continue working with the University to ensure students are protected and successfully complete their studies throughout the exit period.

Appendix 1. Study Centre via Support Service Provider Procedure:



Appendix 2.

STUDY CENTRE (via Support Service Provider) BUSINESS PLAN

Proposal Overview:

| Required Information | Guidance notes | Details |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Proposed by | <i>Internal proposing individual(s) or group</i> | |
| Support Service Provider | <i>Name</i> | |
| Proposed Study Centre Location | <i>Full address</i> | |
| Support Service Provider Details | <i>Full address (if different from above)</i> | <p>Is the Support Service Provider a GUS entity?</p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> |
| Lead contact name and email address | | |
| Rationale | <i>Please provide background on Support Service Provider and explain business case/strategic fit for partnership.</i> | |

| | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|
| | | |
| Planned launch dates | <i>Please state launch date for marketing/recruitment and programme start date.</i> | <p>Launch date: Click or tap to enter a date.</p> <p>Programme start date: Click or tap to enter a date.</p> |
| Proposed programmes | <i>Please state all possible programmes</i> | |
| Proposed mode (FT/PT/DL+) | | |

Market Assessment:

| Required Information | Guidance notes | Details |
|-----------------------|---|---------|
| Sector data | <i>Consult relevant in-country sector data which informs market demand (HESA, Office for Students, Universities UK, British Council, British Embassies)</i> | |
| Internal data sources | <i>Outline any internal data which informs market demand</i> | |
| Key competitor | <i>Identify key competitors within study centre region (30-</i> | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| products and prices | <i>mile radius) – programmes, fees, offering and services</i> | | | |
| Suggested fees | | | | |
| Target market and student needs | <i>Identify target market</i> | | | |
| In-country analysis | <i>Provide any political, economic and legal observations, concerns or requirements</i> | | | |
| No. of planned intakes per year | | Year 1 (Please state months) | Year 2 (Please state months) | Year 3 (Please state months) |
| | | | | |
| Predicted capacity/ enrolments per intake | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
| | | | | |

Financial Analysis:

| Required Information | Guidance notes | Details | | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|----------------------------|---|
| Projected income | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | |
| | | | | | |
| Anticipated costs | | <u>Initial Planning</u> | <u>Launch</u> | <u>On-going Monitoring</u> | <u>On-going Delivery and Operations</u> |

| | | | | | |
|--------------------|--|--|--|---------------------------|--|
| | | Approval and Site Visit (travel and accommodation): | Signage and branding: | Travel and accommodation: | Rent and maintenance: |
| | | Legal cost: | Furniture and fittings: | | Taxation and exchange control arrangements: |
| | | Administration: | IT systems and equipment for learners: | | Additional staffing – academic and non-academic: |
| | | Marketing and recruitment: | IT systems and equipment for business support: | | Student induction packs/event: |
| | | Academic: | | | Annual health and safety checks not included within tenancy agreement: |
| | | Academic Resources: | | | |
| | | Student Support: | | | |
| | | Health and Safety requirements by University (fire, water, asbestos, electrical, etc.) | | | |
| | | Contingency fund [termination, partner insolvency]: | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Anticipated profit | | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 | |
| | | | | | |

Risk Management:

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| Please provide details of any identified risks or concerns and mitigating action required. |
| |

Approval Stage:

| Sign Off/Approval | Additional Notes | Date |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Arden University Executive | | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Partnership Committee | | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Academic Board | | Click or tap to enter a date. |

Appendix 3.

Support Service Provider Due Diligence Form

Details:

| | |
|--|--|
| 1. Organisation name of Support Service Provider | |
| 2. Support Service Provider address | |
| 3. Location of study centre premise (if different to address above). | |
| 4. Lead contact person; name, title and email address. | |
| 5. Company registration number | |

Assessment and Standing:

| | |
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| 6. Does the Support Service Provider have a parent company, if so, please provide name, contract details and company registration number? | |
| 7. Legal Standing - does the Support Service Provider have the legal capacity to enter into this partnership arrangement? | |
| 8. Does any external approval or consent in the UK or overseas pertain this arrangement? | |
| 9. Public Liability Insurance (please provide copy). | |

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| <p>10. Financial Standing - please provide a copy of the last set of accounts to ensure financial stability of the Support Service Provider.</p> | |
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Operations:

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| <p>11. How long will the partnership last? Will there be an opportunity to extend?</p> | |
| <p>12. Current Partnerships - please detail who with; type of business; duration of agreement; number of staff (and students).</p> | |
| <p>13. Previous Partnerships over the last 5-years - please detail who with; type of business; reason for termination.</p> | |
| <p>14. Please state any conflict of business or ethical conflict.</p> | |
| <p>15. Please provide a project plan outlining operational stages and timings.</p> | |
| <p>16. Please provide outline of Support Service Provider obligations and outline key responsibilities.</p> | |
| <p>17. Please provide outline of University obligations and outline key responsibilities.</p> | |
| <p>18. What resources will be needed for this partnership. Please list key equipment, IT requirements, academic</p> | |

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| resources, academic staff and administrative support needed. | |
| 19. How will provision be marketed and recruited? | |
| 20. How can the arrangement be terminated to ensure the student experience is protected? | |

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| 21. Please outline any identified risks or concerns. | |
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| Partnership Committee Sign-off | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Recommendations | |
| Date | |

STUDY CENTRE – SITE VISIT (University owned/leased or Support Service Provider)

| 1. PREMISE | | |
|---|---|-----------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action required |
| When was the premise built? | | |
| How many floors does the premise have? | | |
| Does the premise have any on-site parking? Please provide details. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Can the premise be accessed via good public transport links? Please provide details. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise have a welcoming and accommodating reception area for students and visitors? Please provide details. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise have an access control system? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise provide an opportunity to support any University signage and branding – internally and/or externally? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Will the premise be shared with other parties? If so, please provide details of all other parties, nature of business and number of staff and/or students involved. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

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| How many classrooms will be available for University delivery? | | |
| Please provide details of furniture and equipment available in designated classrooms. | | |
| What is the student number capacity of classrooms? | | |
| What is the student number capacity of the centre and is this in line with the Business Plan expectations? | | |

| 2. FACILITIES | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
| Do students have access to a quiet area for study? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Do students have access to recreation space and facilities? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Do students have access to dining facilities either on the premise or nearby in a local restaurants or cafes? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

| 3. SUPPORT STAFFING & ADMINISTRATION | | |
|---|---|------------------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
| Does the premise have adequate space, furniture and IT equipment to support | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

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| University staff working at the study centre? | | |
| Are there staff facilities for the preparation of refreshments and heating food? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Are there staff facilities for secure and safe storage of personal belongings? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

4. STUDENT WELFARE

| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
|---|---|-----------------|
| Will the Support Service Provider offer any pastoral support to students? Please provide details. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Will the Support Service Provider offer access to accommodation, financial, legal, employment or other advice (visa) to students? Please provide details. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

5. LEARNING RESOURCES (inc. IT)

| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
|--|---|-----------------|
| Does the premise have a library to offer students and will it be adequate to support proposed University programmes? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| What IT resources does the premise have? Please outline number of printers and computer terminals, and the | | |

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| print facility which will be offered to staff and students. | | |
| What internet services come into the building? | | |
| Who is the internet provider? What is the capacity, and can this be shared? | | |
| What is the internet connection speed? | | |
| Does the building have dedicated comms rooms with appropriate security, power and cooling to house active network equipment? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Would the comms room be shared with other parties within the building? What are the sizes of these rooms? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Is the building cabled to office/teaching space? If so, how many end points (RJ45 sockets) and what cabling has been used (CAT-5e, CAT-6, etc.)? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Is there wi-fi already available throughout the building which could provide guest connection for students? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Do teaching spaces have any audio-visual equipment? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

| 6. HEALTH & SAFETY (all relevant certificates and policy documents should be appended to the completed form) | | |
|--|---|-----------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
| Does the premise have a health and safety policy and is there evidence that it meets its legal obligation in this respect? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise have an appropriate number of fire extinguishers, fire marshals, emergency signage, emergency lighting, evacuation procedure and annual testing of evacuation procedures? Does it have appropriate certification to confirm the above as appropriate? Please provide details. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Are their periodic fire tests at the premise? Please provide details | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise have adequate first aid arrangements including appropriate notices, first aid boxes and trained staff? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| What training has the first aider(s) received? Do they receive regular training and updates? Please provide details. | | |
| Is there evidence that the premise meets its legal obligations in respect of disabled access, walkways, | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| toilet facilities and evacuation procedures? | | |
| Does the premise have adequate flooring, lighting and heating? Is air conditioning available? Do windows require restrictors and are blinds available to address sunlight glare? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise have availability of drinking water? Is there regular testing of the water supply? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Does the premise have availability of security patrols and CCTV? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Has the premise been tested for asbestos? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| Is there regular PAT testing of electrical equipment? | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| What is the general condition of the premise, fittings and fixtures? | Choose an item. | |
| Is there a named person with responsibility for ensuring health and safety at the premise? If so, please state name and title. | Choose an item. Additional comments: | |
| What qualifications does the person responsible for Health and Safety possess? Do they receive regular training and updates? Please provide details. | | |

7. DEVELOPMENT OF RESOURCES AND SERVICES

Please outline any Support Service Provider plans for improving premise, service or facilities over the next 12-months.

Appendix 5.

Support Service Provider – Partner Level Review

| Review of Due Diligence: | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
| Legal Standing | | |
| Financial Standing | | |
| Business Operations | | |

| Self-evaluation by Campus Manager/Director of Student Experience: <i>(Please provide an outline of concerns and improvements in the following areas over the last 3-years)</i> | | |
|--|---------------------------|------------------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
| Student numbers over the last 3-year | | |
| General condition of premises, fixtures and fittings | | |
| Communication and assistance from the Support Service Provider | | |
| Regional implications – transport, accommodation, IT or regulations | | |
| Please provide any recommendations: | | |

| Self-evaluation by Support Service Provider: <i>(Please provide an outline of current status and improvements in the following areas over the last 3-years)</i> | | |
|--|--------------------|-----------------|
| | Detail/Information | Action Required |
| General condition of premises, fixtures and fittings | | |
| Communication and assistance from the University | | |
| Future plans and implications | | |
| Please provide any recommendations: | | |

| Partner Level Review Outcome: | |
|--|---|
| Re-approval by Partnership Committee | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Contract Renewal Date: | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| Recommendations and comments from the Partnership Committee: | |